Destination School^{PLUS}: A Leadership Guide For The School^{PLUS} Environment

Undertaken by Robin Endsin (research analyst), on behalf of the:

School^{plus} Leadership Research Consortium

Barry Bashutski – Saskatchewan School Boards Association
Diane Gingras – Saskatchewan Learning
Don Hoium – Saskatchewan Learning
Brian Keegan – Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit
Jane Macleod – Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit
Michael Tymchak – Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit

November, 2004
ISBN 1-894743-84-9

105-02886/

"There and Back Again" A School^{PLUS} Adventure

As we put the finishing touches on this Guidebook my mind goes back to the day the School^{PLUS} Leadership Research Consortium asked me to become involved. I recall that we were all sitting around a table in a meeting room at the University of Regina. Barry, Jane, Michael and Brian were joking and teasing each other and talking about projects they were involved in. Diane was making sure everything was set up so the meeting would go smoothly. Don was running a little late. And as for me … I was wondering why I had been invited.

I had worked with the Consortium before on a School^{PLUS} literature review. I knew about their seemingly boundless energy and enthusiasm and it continued to impress me. Yet I also knew that along with this energy and enthusiasm came a willingness to take on almost any adventure. This made me, a comfort-loving hobbit at heart, a little nervous.

Don did arrive that day. The meeting did get started and in the end, despite my misgivings, the momentum of the group just swept me along and I joined in. Now, as we send our final (?) draft off to the desk-top publishers I recognize this Guidebook owes its creation to a number of people:

There are the members of the School^{PLUS} Leadership Research Consortium: Barry Bashutski, Brian Keegan, Diane Gingras, Don Hoium, Jane Macleod, and Michael Tymchak. Their foresight, confidence, enthusiasm and great problem-solving skills made the project possible and kept it on track when we ran into a glitch or snag.

There are the gifted facilitators who conducted the Field Study: Dennis Barnett, Susan Bates, Christine Boyczuk, Barry Earl, Earle Newton, Twyla Salm, Gary Shaddock, Marlene Taylor and Barbara Young. Their insight and commitment to the project and their ability to deal with whatever we sent their way with generosity and grace was invaluable.

There is Myrna Wruck from the Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit (SPDU), the cheerful organizational genius, who arranged all the details for the Dialogues, (and then rearranged them when unforeseen events intervened).

Then, of course there are the Field Study Dialogue participants themselves; those who took time out of their busy lives to talk to us about School[PLUS], who trusted us with their stories - with their successes, their challenges and their dreams for the future.

Finally, there are the desk-top publishers, who through their creative talent (and patience) managed to smooth over many of the rough edges and make everything fit. Even as I write this I almost hear them mumbling under their breath, "This better be the **last** thing she wants to add!!"

Actually, I think it is.

Robin Endsin, October 2004

Table Of Contents

Destination School^{PLUS}: A Leadership Guide

Background v

Intent And Purpose vi

Introduction vii

Guidebook Format ix

Section One

Leadership In The School^{PLUS} Environment 1

- School^{PLUS} Leadership Characteristics 2
- Curiosity 2
- Courage 2
- Compassion 3
- Perseverance 3

Section Two

Responding To Challenges: School^{PLUS} Actions And Leadership Skills 4

- Introduction 4
- Sharing The Vision 5
- Fine-Tuning The Vision 9
- Planning To Support The Vision 14
- Working Together 18
- Staying On Track 21

Section Three

Personal Leadership Inventory 25

Section Four

Reflection And Planning For Success 29

- School^{PLUS} Leadership For Me 29
- School^{PLUS} Leadership With Others 30
- How An Elder Helped A Community 33
- The Vision For School^{PLUS} 34

Appendices

Appendix A – School^{PLUS} Literature Review: Summary Of Findings 35

Appendix B – Facilitated Dialogue Sessions 36

Destination School[PLUS]: A Leadership Guide

Background

In the two years that have elapsed since the publication of the provincial response to the *Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School: Final Report* (Tymchak, M. 2001), School[PLUS] has been widely discussed amongst teachers, school administrators, parents and other educational stakeholders. Most have agreed that the reforms proposed are timely but that more work needs to be done in order for School[PLUS] to become a reality in communities throughout the province.

As one means of supporting this work a School[PLUS] Leadership Research Consortium was created in 2003 with representatives from the Saskatchewan School Boards Association; the Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit (SPDU), Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation; the Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit (SELU), University of Saskatchewan; the Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit (SIDRU), University of Regina, and Saskatchewan Learning. Since its inception, the Consortium has undertaken and completed three initiatives in support of School[PLUS] actualization:

1. a review of the national and international literature, providing a summary of conditions that support School[PLUS] -like environments;[1]

2. a Field Study, engaging stakeholders from several school division communities in facilitated dialogue sessions related to School[PLUS] leadership;[2] and

3. this leadership Guidebook which is designed to provide individuals, groups and organizations with leadership support regarding School[PLUS].

[1] Specifically the researcher reviewed current literature in response to the question: "What are the enabling conditions (vision, skill, resources, action planning, governance, etc) in schools and communities that support the establishment and sustainability of School[PLUS] environments characterized by community education practices, strong learning programs and integrated school linked services?" A summary of findings can be found in Appendix A. A more detailed description of these findings can be found at www.sasklearning.gov.sk.ca.

[2] The findings of these dialogue sessions form the basis for this School[PLUS] Leadership Guide. A description of the Field Study with a list of school division communities involved and a summary of the findings can be found in Appendix B.

Intent and Purpose

This Guidebook is intended for individuals, groups and organizations who are involved in making School^{PLUS} a reality in their communities. Its specific focus is on how a special kind of leadership related to the philosophy of School^{PLUS} can contribute to mobilizing forces within a community.

Leadership in the context of School^{PLUS} is "special" in several ways:

- Leadership is a possibility for all members of a community.
- There is often no direct connection between the position one holds and one's leadership potential.
- Leaders do not come "ready made". In large part, leaders develop skills by addressing concerns and challenges.

The purpose of this Guidebook is to encourage you, your group or organization to:

- reflect on leadership in the School^{PLUS} context.
- reflect on the leadership challenges and opportunities within your community.
- consider where you might wish to provide leadership.
- consider leadership skills you already possess and those you may wish to develop.

Introduction

> *"Schools are becoming something they have never been before. To date we have simply expanded expectations and, in some cases, added a few resources. The time has come to recognize the situation for what it is, to name the whirlwind. The Task Force believes that we need to build a new kind of institution dedicated to the needs of children and youth." (Tymchak, M., 2001, page 44)*

As we move into the 21st century, many of us would agree with Dr. Tymchak's analysis; we are at a place in our history where tinkering with how our schools operate, expanding expectations or adding resources will not create the changes necessary to meet the needs of children and youth. Those of us who work with and/or care for children and youth feel the effects of the whirlwind[1] Dr. Tymchak writes of everyday. We know change needs to happen. Yet many of us are still a little unsure of how that change should come about.

"Yes," we say, "a new institution is what we need! Now when are you going to start creating it?"

"Whenever you're ready!" we hear the reply.

We believe that in order to meet the challenges that face children and youth, "grassroots" change, or change connected to the needs of the communities in which we live and work, is important. At the same time, we are frustrated with what seems to be the nature of this kind of change. It seems that everything is a little vague, nothing seems very "clear cut". We keep looking for the person in "charge" of it all.

Technical Challenges: problems for which we already have a solution, "the necessary know-how and procedures". We look to experts to solve these problems.

Adaptive Challenges: "problems that are not amenable to authoritative expertise or standard operating procedures. They cannot be solved by someone who provides the answers from on high" (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, page 13)

In their text, *Leadership on the Line* (2002), Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky suggest these feelings are quite normal for individuals who live and work in communities or organizations facing what they call "adaptive challenges". According to Heifetz and Linsky, when a problem or challenge is complex and requires experimentation or learning new ways, it is the people who are actually living with the problem or challenge, rather than an outside expert, who must come up with the solution.

They caution that "adaptive change" is not for the faint of heart. Rather, such change forces us to go back to our roots, to rethink the way we do things, and even to rethink who we are in our families, our workplace and our society as a whole. The effort associated with

[1] The Task Force identified fourteen forces or "tectonic factors" that impact the equilibrium of Saskatchewan schools. They include: special needs, demographic shifts, the information society and globalization, poverty, increase in high school drop-out rates, pupil mobility, family changes, cross-cultural issues, human service integration, rural depopulation, curriculum reform, career concerns, violence and student attitudes and behavior.

such change also encourages us to "travel light", to let go of many of our cherished notions regarding "the way it is supposed to be". This is why we are only willing to take on the challenge of becoming leaders of adaptive change if we are convinced that what is at stake is worth the risk.

"Every transition begins with an ending. We have to let go of the old thing before we can pick up the new – not just outwardly, but inwardly, where we keep our connections to the people and places that act as definitions of who we are." (Bridges, W., 1980, page 11)

The changes associated with School^{PLUS} call on us to take a leap of faith, to let go of what we know how to do and venture into areas we are not sure of. They ask that we, who may not be "experts" or "authorities", become leaders.

As you browse through this Guidebook, think about the children, youth and families you work and live with. Think about what you want for them, what you think they need, what you believe is possible and what you are willing to do to make your hopes a reality.

Guidebook Format

During the dialogue sessions of the School[PLUS] Field Study, facilitators heard individuals speak passionately about the nature of leadership in their communities, providing examples of actions and leadership skills that they employed to meet challenges they encountered. We think that through their stories and comments they provided a good description of the "lay of the land". The Guidebook itself is a bit of a chronicle of the journey others have taken on their way to making School[PLUS] a reality in their communities.

This Guidebook contains four sections:

Section One: Leadership in the School[PLUS] Environment

Those wondering about the nature of leadership in a School[PLUS] community may find what they are looking for here. In this section four qualities that characterize School[PLUS] leaders are summarized. You may be surprised to discover that School[PLUS] leaders can be anyone from a superintendent to a student. Quite simply, School[PLUS] leaders are people who have grasped the importance of the School[PLUS] vision and are willing to work to make their community's interpretation of the vision a reality. Interspersed throughout this section are a number of questions designed to encourage personal reflection about leadership and School[PLUS].

Section Two: Responding to Challenges – School[PLUS] Actions and Leadership Skills

Representatives of the School[PLUS] communities who took part in the dialogue sessions of the Field Study described a number of challenges they are encountering on their journey to School[PLUS], as well as actions they are taking to respond to these challenges. Within their stories and comments several leadership skills stood out. In this section leadership skills are described in the context of the School[PLUS] challenges and responsive actions. Again, questions to encourage reflection are included.

Section Three: Personal Leadership Inventory

This section includes a Personal Inventory, allowing individuals the opportunity to consider where they fit regarding the leadership skills that have been identified in Section Two.

Please be aware that the Personal Leadership Inventory presented here is not all encompassing or prescriptive. You may find, because of your own, or your community's unique qualities, that some leadership skills you believe are important are missing. There may also be leadership qualities or skills that are included that do not seem to fit for you.

It is also important to keep in mind that while the nature of the School^{PLUS} vision suggests that all School^{PLUS} community members are potential leaders (and this Guidebook is intended for all members of the School^{PLUS} community), it is not a "how-to" manual. It may be that some parts of this Guidebook will not apply to your unique situation. Please take and use the parts that fit for you and your community.

Section Four: Reflection and Planning for Success

This section provides individuals and groups an opportunity to reflect on School^{PLUS} leadership strengths they currently have, and on areas they would like to enhance. It also provides the opportunity for individuals and groups to reflect on how the skills identified for enhancement might be obtained by focusing on developing a School^{PLUS} Leadership Development Plan.

Leadership in the School^{PLUS} Environment

> *". . . an opportunity of greatest significance lies before us – nothing more and nothing less than the forging of a new society. . . . Above all, the needs of children and youth of every race and color must be met, especially the need for good public education, if we are to flourish as a people." (Tymchak, M., 2001, page 25)*

The *Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School Final Report* with its accompanying vision of School^{PLUS} reminds us that in the early years of this new millennium we live in interesting times. While the rapidly changing nature of our society causes many of us to be anxious about our own future and the future of our children, the School^{PLUS} vision offers us a way of approach. Through it we see that "interesting times" can also be times filled with opportunities.

Within the context of School^{PLUS} many of those opportunities are related to leadership. The stories and comments of participants in the School^{PLUS} Field Study dialogue sessions suggest they believe the School^{PLUS} vision encourages community members to adopt a new perspective about leadership. Instead of associating leadership with a particular position, dialogue participants suggest we need to think "outside the box" when we think of whom a School^{PLUS} leader might be. They believe that School^{PLUS} leaders are characterized by the qualities they exhibit, rather than the positions they hold.

> *"School^{PLUS} leaders can be anyone. They can be a teacher, a student, an elder or a member of the business community. Think* outside the box *when you think about whom a School^{PLUS} leader might be."*

In this section, you are invited to consider four qualities that characterize a School^{PLUS} leader. The questions are intended to help you reflect on what these qualities mean to you and the School^{PLUS} community to which you belong.

> *"There are leaders out there and we need to recognize them. They might be your next door neighbor if you give them a chance and support."*

School^{PLUS} Leaders are characterized by their Curiosity

Leaders in the School^{PLUS} community employ a questioning approach to their practice and an open-minded attitude to possibilities within their communities. They continually renew their commitment to children and youth and to the communities they serve by reflecting on, and asking questions about their own and others' practice. While they are curious, they are also respectful of their fellow community members, recognizing that during these times of transition it is often important to "tread lightly" as we seek to find our way.

Think about what it means to be curious as a leader.

Questions to reflect on:

What does curiosity mean to you in the School^{PLUS} context?

What kinds of questions do you think School^{PLUS} leaders might ask to help support the learning of children and youth and other members of the community?

How might you go about asking questions about your own practice? About the practice of others?

In what ways is curiosity an important quality for a School^{PLUS} leader?

School^{PLUS} Leaders are characterized by their Courage

Leaders in the School^{PLUS} community display the courage of their convictions. Believing in and being committed to their vision of School^{PLUS}, they are willing to take risks in order to achieve it. They display confidence in questioning the boundaries of "what is" and are willing to challenge themselves and others to improve their community.

Think about what it means to display the courage of your convictions in your School^{PLUS} community.

Questions to reflect on:

Can you think of those in your School^{PLUS} community who seem willing to take a risk for the School^{PLUS} vision?

Where might they get their courage?

What kinds of risks would you be willing to take to make your vision of School[PLUS] a reality?

In what ways is courage an important quality for a School[PLUS] leader?

School[PLUS] Leaders are characterized by their Compassion

Leaders in the School[PLUS] community are willing to support others as they labour with change. They take time to understand others' perspectives and are slow to judge. They are able to understand and balance their own role in the community with others' roles. They frequently serve as sounding boards, providing support and perspective for others as they seek to clarify their roles.

Think about what it means to be compassionate in the School[PLUS] context.

Questions to reflect on:

Can you think of those in your School[PLUS] community who seem particularly compassionate?

What does compassion in the School[PLUS] context mean to you?

Why might compassion be an important quality for a School[PLUS] leader?

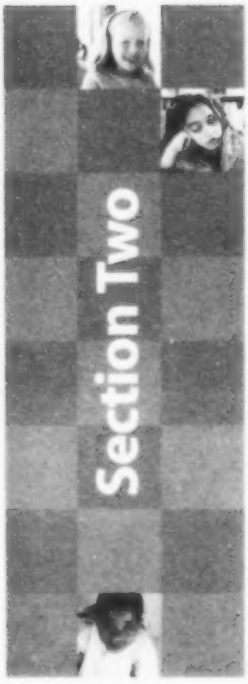
School[PLUS] Leaders are characterized by their Perseverance

Leaders in the School[PLUS] community are willing to persevere in the face of ambiguity and conflict. They understand that as School[PLUS] communities adapt and change to reflect local and global realities, anxiety and feelings of discomfort may occur. School[PLUS] leaders are able to stay with the change process and learn from it, ultimately clarifying issues for themselves and others.

Think about what it means to stick with something or persevere in the School[PLUS] context.

Questions to reflect on:

Can you think of those in your School[PLUS] community who stick with a situation even though they feel uncertain or confused? What do you think enables them to do that? Why might perseverance be an important quality for a School[PLUS] leader?



Responding to Challenges: School^{PLUS} Actions and Leadership Skills

"... we believe leadership, while perilous, is an enterprise worthy of the costs. Our communities, organizations, and societies need people, from wherever they work and live, to take up the challenges within reach rather than complain about the lack of leadership from on high or hold off until they receive a "call" to action . . ." (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, page 3)

Mapping new territory can be daunting. There are so many things we don't know when we set out. There is such a temptation to throw up our hands in frustration, to demand that "those in charge" provide a "concrete plan". We want avenues and streets that are clearly marked and all we ever seem to get is a general description of which way is North!

Participants in the Field Study dialogue sessions frequently voiced their frustration over the lack of a ready-made School^{PLUS} map to follow and ... they also described how they were going about creating that map. Not only did they describe challenges but they also explained the actions they were taking to meet those challenges and the leadership skills they found necessary as they carried out those actions.

In this section, you have an opportunity to reflect on five School^{PLUS} challenges and the responsive actions and leadership skills that dialogue participants identified through their comments and stories.

Challenge	School[PLUS] Action
Some members of the School[PLUS] community are unfamiliar with the vision of School[PLUS].	**Sharing the Vision**
Each School[PLUS] community needs to "fine tune" the vision to meet their needs.	Fine-Tuning the Vision
Transforming a specific School[PLUS] vision into reality requires planning.	Planning to Support the Vision
School[PLUS] means that many different individuals will need to find ways to work together.	Working Together
As School[PLUS] initiatives unfold, community members need to be able to make informed decisions.	Staying on Track

Some members of the School[PLUS] community are unfamiliar with the vision of School[PLUS]

School[PLUS] Action

Sharing the Vision

> *"We need to market the vision. We need to let people know what School[PLUS] means to us, that it's not business as usual."*

While many members of the School[PLUS] community are familiar with the broad School[PLUS] vision, others such as parents, students and members of the business community are less aware of what School[PLUS] might mean for them. For School[PLUS] to be successful, communities need everyone working together. The leadership skills associated with "Sharing the Vision" relate to **communicating your understanding** of School[PLUS] with others.

Leadership Skills

Communicating the Vision

Think about what School[PLUS] means to you. Now think about how you might explain School[PLUS] to a colleague, to a friend, or to a stranger. The reflective questions included here are designed to help

Communicating the Vision

- *informal communication skills*
- *formal communication skills*
- *personal commitment to sharing the vision of School^{PLUS}*

you think about School^{PLUS} leadership skills associated with communicating your understanding of School^{PLUS}. They include: informal communication skills, (such as those you would use when you talk to a friend or neighbor), and formal communication skills (such as those you would use when speaking in front of an audience or when writing a letter). You are also asked to consider your personal commitment to sharing the vision of School^{PLUS} with others.

Communicating informally: Telling a neighbor or friend about School^{PLUS}

Much of the work of sharing the School^{PLUS} vision with others can be accomplished at the informal level. Think about how often we chat with neighbors and friends, or even the person next to us in the grocery line about an event or news item that is important to us. School^{PLUS} is "news" for Saskatchewan people and the message is positive! Think about what School^{PLUS} means to you and what it might mean to others.

> *"School^{PLUS} means involving the community in the school to meet the needs of all students."*

> *"When I think of School^{PLUS} the first thing I think of is a warm and caring environment."*

Resource: School^{PLUS} website
www.schoolplus.gov.sk.ca

Question to reflect on:

How might I describe School^{PLUS} to a neighbor, friend or a casual acquaintance?

Communicating more formally: Describing School^{PLUS} to an audience

You may also be asked to share your sense of the School^{PLUS} vision in a more formal manner in front of an audience. For example, your employer or a volunteer organization you belong to may ask you to give a short description of what School^{PLUS} means to you at a meeting. Think about what you might say.

> *"School^{PLUS} is about getting everybody in the community (that includes everybody from parents to members of the business community, from teachers to resource officers*

and social workers) involved and working together to support children and youth. It's 'School', but with a [PLUS], because by working together we can give kids what they need, when they need it."

"School[PLUS] is about . . . the development of the whole family, thereby strengthening the community at large. Agencies and community members are valuable support in helping to provide the requirements to build healthy, productive, caring students and families."

Question to reflect on:

How might I describe School[PLUS] to an audience made up of people who live and work in and around my community?

Resource: School[PLUS] at a Glance
http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/branches/cap_building_acct/school_plus/pdf/ataglance.pdf

Communicating more formally: Writing about School[PLUS]

You may be asked to share the School[PLUS] vision with others in written form. Perhaps an organization or business in your community is interested in what School[PLUS] might mean for them.

Dear Ms. Green,

You have likely noticed some changes in our neighborhood school over the last little while. To help you understand those changes I would like to take this opportunity to share my understanding of School[PLUS], our new way of "doing school" in Saskatchewan.

Several years ago, a Task Force, appointed by the provincial government, gathered information on the changing role of schools in our Saskatchewan society. After listening to the ideas of people across Saskatchewan, the Task Force reported back to the Government. In their report, they explained that changes in society mean that we need to consider new and different ways to provide children, youth and families with the support they need.

The Task Force recommended we need to rethink our way of organizing. In particular we need to rethink the way "school" is done. They suggested what we think of as regular school should continue. Students should still

learn how to read and write and do math, but there should be an added PLUS. Support workers, such as social workers, health care providers, and resource officers should work more closely with schools. Community members and businesses should become more involved in supporting the school and, in turn, the school should become more of a centre of the community. In short, schools should become School[PLUS].

As a member of our business community, I invite you to become involved . . .

Question to reflect on:

How might I explain what School[PLUS] means in a letter to a community member?

Sharing my commitment to School[PLUS] with others

When someone asks you about School[PLUS] perhaps you are quite comfortable describing what the vision means to you. What if they don't ask? Consider your personal commitment to the vision of School[PLUS]. In what ways do you look for opportunities to share the vision with others? Think about what being proactive regarding the School[PLUS] vision might mean to you.

"You have to understand the importance of taking the opportunity to share your ideas with the community, whether it's at the corner store or the donut shop or the hockey rink."

"We need to beat the drum and let people know we're excited and it's important!"

"We have a great idea in School[PLUS], but we need to promote it more. Nobody outside the school knows about it."

Question to reflect on:

How can I take every opportunity to make sure that all members of my School[PLUS] community understand what School[PLUS] is all about?

Challenge	School[PLUS] Action
Some members of the School[PLUS] community are unfamiliar with the vision of School[PLUS].	Sharing the Vision
Each School[PLUS] community needs to "fine-tune" the vision to meet their needs.	**Fine-Tuning the Vision**
Transforming a specific School[PLUS] vision into reality requires planning.	Planning to Support the Vision
School[PLUS] means that many different individuals will need to find ways to work together.	Working Together
As School[PLUS] initiatives unfold, community members need to be able to make informed decisions.	Staying on Track

Each School[PLUS] community needs to "fine-tune" the vision to fit their needs.

School[PLUS] Action

Fine-Tuning the Vision

> *"We need to engage everybody . . ."*
>
> *"We need to start the process, plan and invite people in. We need to stop distancing people."*
>
> *"We need to let people know that they matter and their input matters."*

Once most members of your School[PLUS] community have a basic understanding of the broad vision of School[PLUS], you will want to engage them in a process of further developing that vision so it better fits your community's needs. The School[PLUS] leadership skills associated with "Fine-Tuning the Vision" are related to **engaging and organizing**.

Leadership Skills

Engaging and Organizing

Engaging and Organizing

- *extending an invitation*
- *creating a positive environment*
- *creating an agenda*
- *gathering information*

Think about how comfortable you are with organizing a "visioning" meeting with the purpose of fine-tuning the broad School^{PLUS} vision to meet your community's needs. Specific School^{PLUS} leadership skills involved include: *extending an invitation, creating a positive environment* for participation, *creating an agenda,* and *gathering information* from other communities who have undergone a similar visioning process.

> *"We hold an annual visioning night where we talk about what worked and what didn't in the past year and figure out the picture we need to 'see' to go forward."*

School^{PLUS} "Visioning"

School^{PLUS} "visioning" meetings provide community members with the opportunity to fine-tune the broad School^{PLUS} vision so that it better meets the needs of their community. A School^{PLUS} visioning meeting brings community members together to:

- share their School^{PLUS} community related successes.
- share "what is happening" in their community right now. This includes School^{PLUS} challenges they believe need to be addressed and School^{PLUS} opportunities that they think need to be investigated.
- fine-tune their community School^{PLUS} vision in light of what has been discussed.

Extending an invitation

For many of us inviting people to attend a meeting seems like a fairly simple skill. Yet in the context of School^{PLUS} there may be a little more to it. Dialogue participants spoke of the importance of "follow through" when extending an invitation and also emphasized the fact that sometimes you have to "be persistent, invite, invite, invite and invite again."

Some also suggested that it might be helpful to understand what is involved in making a "cold call" to someone you do not know and haven't met.

Question to reflect on:

How might I encourage people in my community to come to a School[PLUS] visioning meeting?

> *"We need to feel comfortable about making 'cold calls' in the community, making contact and inviting them in, engaging them and then we need to follow up. We need to keep asking people to become involved."*

Cold Calls

Most of us associate making "cold calls" with business. Yet if we really think about it, "cold calls" are used in many different areas. In fact, you have probably made a "cold call". A "cold call" is just asking someone you do not know and haven't met to become involved in something that matters to you. Making a cold call for a School[PLUS] visioning meeting is about:

- making that initial contact (whether by phone, e-mail, letter or in person).
- engaging the person (some might say convincing them), to become involved by explaining what will be happening at the visioning meeting and why it is important that they attend.
- following up or checking back to make sure they are still planning on attending.

Resource: *Working Together Toward School[PLUS]: Parent and Community Partnerships in Education Handbook* (2002), http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/branches/partner_aboriginal/policy/docs/roleofsch/may2002prnthndbook.pdf

Question to reflect on:

How might I go about making a "cold call" to someone in my School[PLUS] community?

Creating a positive environment

It is one thing to invite someone to a meeting. It is another to know what makes them feel comfortable enough to contribute. Dialogue

participants suggest it is important to understand what makes different members of the School[PLUS] community "comfortable" when thinking about the environment.

> *"We need to know that people come from different places. We need to 'walk in their shoes' to help them feel comfortable in contributing."*

Question to reflect on:

How might I know what makes a parent feel comfortable in sharing his/her views? a member of the business community? a teacher? a student? a human service provider?

Human service providers include health, social, justice, recreation, culture, education, and other professionals that support and contribute to the well-being of children, youth, adults and families.

Designing the Surround

Robert Garmston and Bruce Wellman have spent considerable time studying the kinds of structures that support positive meeting environments. They suggest that paying attention to "the surround"[4] will help those attending a meeting to focus and contribute. They offer several principles designers need to be aware of in this regard. Three of these principles are described here:

1. All participants and the facilitator should be able to see and hear each other.

2. The seating arrangements should enable members to focus on the flip chart (or other display devices) and the facilitator.

3. Memory displays and/or recording of meeting key points should support sound thinking about meeting content and processes.

For a more detailed description of Garmston and Wellman's work please see their text; *The Adaptive School: Developing and Facilitating Collaborative Groups.*

[4] Garmston and Wellman borrowed the term "surround" from David Perkins see, *Smart Schools* (1992).

Question to reflect on:

How might I "design a surround" so that those who attend our visioning meeting are better able to focus on the topics at hand and feel free to contribute in a meaningful manner?

Creating an agenda

An agenda is also an important part of a well-organized meeting. An agenda helps keep participants on topic and helps ensure that all points that need to be addressed, are addressed.

Question to reflect on:

How might I go about preparing the agenda or help someone write the agenda for our visioning meeting? What might the agenda look like?

Gathering information from other communities

Learning from the experience of others is a key aspect of School^{SM}. Some learning communities have already conducted "visioning" meetings.

Question to reflect on:

How might I go about learning from the experiences of other communities?

Challenge	School^{PLUS} Action
Some members of the School^{PLUS} community are unfamiliar with the School^{PLUS}.	Sharing the Vision
Each School^{PLUS} community needs to "fine tune" the vision to meet their needs.	Fine-Tuning the Vision
Transforming a specific School^{PLUS} vision into reality requires planning.	**Planning to Support the Vision**
School^{PLUS} means that many different individuals will need to find ways to work together.	Working Together
As School^{PLUS} initiatives unfold, community members need to be able to make informed decisions.	Staying on Track

Transforming a specific School^{PLUS} vision into a reality requires planning.

School^{PLUS} Action:

Planning to Support the Vision

> *". . . all things are created twice. There's a mental or first creation, and a physical or second creation to all things." (Covey, S., 1989, page 99)*

A vision, even a well-specified vision, is still only a dream without a plan of action. To create such a plan leaders need to be able to identify actions or initiatives that support the specific vision the community has developed. The School^{PLUS} leadership skill sets associated with the process of "Planning to Support the Vision" include: **identifying actions or initiatives** that support your vision and **developing a plan** that describes how those actions or initiatives will be carried out.

Leadership Skills

Identifying Actions or Initiatives

Think about the specific School[PLUS] vision your community has developed and the importance of that vision to the well-being of children and youth in your community. Now consider what kinds of actions or initiatives might support that vision. The School[PLUS] leadership skills outlined here include: *understanding our needs, identifying actions or initiatives* related to those needs, and *developing a plan* with others that supports our School[PLUS] vision.

Resource: *A Practical Guide to Needs Assessment*, Kavita Gupta, Jossey-Bass 1999

Identifying Actions or Initiatives

- *understanding our needs*
- *identifying actions*
- *developing a plan*

Understanding our needs

Many School[PLUS] community members are familiar with the term "needs assessment". Within this leadership skill the "needs assessment" has an added twist. Not only are you asked to consider the needs of the community as a whole, but you are also asked to balance this with your understanding of the needs of individuals within the community. Dialogue participants suggest this requires conducting both more formal needs assessments (sometimes through a survey) and also more informal needs assessments (perhaps by chatting informally with community members or making informal observations).

Resource: *How to Conduct Focus Groups* – A.A. Einsiedel, L.M. Brown and F. Ross (1996), University of Saskatchewan

Questions to reflect on:

How might I find out what the needs of my community as a whole are?

How might I find out what the needs of individuals in my community are?

How might I plan for a needs assessment?

How would I find the resources to do a needs assessment?

Resource: School and Division Improvement Initiative Support Package. Contact the School[PLUS] Unit at Saskatchewan Learning.

Resource: Effective Practices Toward School[PLUS]: http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/branches/cap_building_acct/school_plus/index.shtml

Resource: *Building Communities of Hope: Best Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of At-Risk and Indian and Metis Students,* Saskatchewan Learning: http://www.sasklearning.gov.sk.ca/branches/children_services/community_ed/docs/buildcomm/ofhope.pdf

Identifying actions or initiatives

Once we have balanced the whole community needs with the individual needs in our School[PLUS] community we need to identify actions and initiatives that will support those needs. Sometimes this means engaging others at a grassroots level. Sometimes this means employing creative search skills in order to discover new initiatives.

> *"We need more grassroots planning, more meeting together with everyone to come up with a plan."*
>
> *"We need to continually look for new initiatives that will support students."*
>
> *"We know we need to encourage a wider approach, develop a strategy that encourages career paths other than university."*

Questions to reflect on:

How might I set up a grassroots meeting with the purpose of coming up with actions or initiatives to meet the needs we have identified?

How might I use creative search skills to find out about initiatives or actions that others have taken or "think outside the box" and create initiatives or actions to meet our needs?

Developing a plan

You've come up with some initiatives or actions to meet your School^{plus} community's needs. Now you need to develop a plan to help carry those actions or initiatives out.

You need to consider the specific elements that go into a plan that will provide clear direction to carry it out.

> *"We need workshops that describe how schools can network with their community to establish programming or use already developed programs."*

Questions to reflect on:

How might I work with others to develop a plan that will support the actions or initiatives we have decided upon?

How might I adapt our plan so that it ties in with other initiatives or actions that already exist?

How might I make our plan more specific? For example, what about including specific targets and timelines that provide benchmarks for our progress?

Resource: *Working Together Toward School^{plus}: Parent and Community Parnterships in Education Handbook* (2002), http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/branches/partner_aboriginal/policy/docs/roleofsch/may2002prnthndbook.pdf

Challenge	School^{PLUS} Action
Some members of the School^{PLUS} community are unfamiliar with the vision of School^{PLUS}.	Sharing the Vision
Each School^{PLUS} community needs to "fine tune" the vision to meet their needs.	Fine-Tuning the Vision
Transforming a specific School^{PLUS} vision into reality requires planning.	Planning to Support the Vision
School^{PLUS} means that many different individuals will need to find ways to work together.	**Working Together**
As School^{PLUS} initiatives unfold, community members need to be able to make informed decisions.	Staying on Track

School^{PLUS} means that many different individuals will need to find ways to work together.

School^{PLUS} Action:

Working Together

> *"We need training in how to open minds and move out of our comfort zones. We need to be supported in doing this and to support others as they do this."*

> *"We need opportunities to learn what other members of the community do and what services they offer. We also need to understand what kind of environments they work in and how their services are delivered."*

The School^{PLUS} vision requires the involvement of many different kinds of personnel. As more and more people become involved in the School^{PLUS} community, finding ways to work together becomes important. School^{PLUS} leadership involves the development of a collaborative culture. The School^{PLUS} leadership skill sets associated with "Working Together" include: **clarifying roles and responsibilities** and **creating a space** for shared understanding and agreements.

Resources: The Nimble Collaboration – *Fine-Tuning Your Collaboration for Lasting Success*, Karen Ray, Wilder, 2002

***Whatever it Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don't Learn*, Richard Dufour, Rebecca Dufour, Robert Eaker and Gayle Karhanek. National Education Services, 2004**

Leadership Skills

Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities

Think about all the different individuals who are, or might be involved in your School^{PLUS} community in the future, as you work to make your vision of School^{PLUS} a reality. Working with others can be a complex business but clarifying who does what and who is responsible for what can help. Three School^{PLUS} leadership skills are outlined here: the ability to *describe* the way *roles* and *responsibilities* fit into your School^{PLUS} vision; *"walking the walk"* which shows others, through your actions, how roles and responsibilities can be carried out; and *creating a space* for shared understanding and agreement.

Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities

- *describing roles and responsibilities*
- *walking the walk*
- *creating space*

Describing roles and responsibilities

Part of understanding how the responsibilities associated with your role fits with those of others is being able to describe just what responsibilities your role does include. The next step is to consider how the responsibilities associated with your role might change as your community's School^{PLUS} vision evolves. Once you can describe your present and possible future role and responsibilities in your School^{PLUS} community you may be ready to help others clarify their roles and responsibilities.

Questions to reflect on:

What might my current "job description" look like?

How might it change as my School^{PLUS} community's vision evolves?

How might I help others write a present and future job description?

Walking the walk

> *"We need to be good role models. We can teach what it means to be a village by acting from the heart and treating others as if they matter."*

"For many people the highest compliment they can pay another is that they 'walk the walk'. In other words, they provide definition to their roles and responsibilities through their actions. We call them 'good role models'."

"Don't tell me what you believe. I'll watch what you do and I'll tell you what you believe." Anonymous . . .

Questions to reflect on:

Who in my community do I see as good role models?

What qualities make them good role models?

How might I be a good role model?

Creating a Space

As you work to make your specific School[PLUS] vision a reality there may be some hitches along the way. Change and transition can be difficult. It is during these times when we need to create a space or open the territory so that we and others can see more clearly how to go on.

There are likely times in your life at work, at home or in the community when you have been called upon to create a space or "open the territory", so that ways can be found to reach a shared understanding or agreement. Think about the skills you used. Perhaps you are a good listener? Maybe you are able to see all sides of an issue and describe them to others? Maybe you can identify the places where people are "hanging on" and need to let go? Maybe you can help people feel comfortable with changing areas of responsibility?

"As agencies intertwine, Boards' roles and responsibilities will change and governance will be more shared. We need to work hard to eliminate 'turf protection' at all levels."

Question to reflect on:

What kind of strategies might I use to help eliminate "turf protection"?

"Teachers tend to see themselves as fixers. But that has to change. We just can't do it by ourselves. We need to feel safe enough to ask for help and know who or where to ask."

Question to reflect on:

If "turf protection" was an issue for a member of my School[PLUS] community, what might I do or say to help?

Challenge	School[PLUS] Action
Some members of the School[PLUS] community are unfamiliar with the vision of School[PLUS].	Sharing the Vision
Each School[PLUS] community needs to "fine tune" the vision to meet their needs.	Fine-Tuning the Vision
Transforming a specific School[PLUS] vision into reality requires planning.	Planning to Support the Vision
School[PLUS] means that many different individuals will need to find ways to work together.	Working Together
As School[PLUS] initiatives unfold, community members need to be able to make informed decisions.	**Staying on Track**

As School[PLUS] initiatives unfold, community members need to be able to make informed decisions.

School[PLUS] Action:

Staying on Track

"We need to get the information we need to move forward. If we have to change direction because of what we've learned, make tough decisions, we'll know why we're changing direction."

"We need to hear the facts, what the data is saying and the stories, what the people are saying about initiatives so we can make good decisions."

As School[plus] communities move towards making their specific vision of School[plus] a reality, they engage in decision-making regarding how to proceed. In order to "stay on track" with their decision making, members of School[plus] communities get together and ask questions regarding where they stand in terms of their plans and initiatives and working relationships. The leadership skill sets associated with "Staying on Track" are related to **collaborative inquiry**.

Collaborative Inquiry Leadership

- *developing shared understandings*
- *making connections*
- *providing interpretation*

Leadership Skills

Collaborative Inquiry

Bruce Wellman and Laura Lipton (2004) suggest those who wish to engage in collaborative decision making on behalf of children and youth would do well to follow a method they have refined called "data-driven collaborative inquiry". According to Wellman and Lipton this approach encourages leaders to work together to make meaning of data and information. The three skills outlined here are based on Wellman and Lipton's work. They include: developing shared understandings, making connections, and providing interpretations and explanations.

Resource: *Data-Driven Dialogue – A Facilitator's Guide to Collaborative Inquiry*, Bruce Wellman and Laura Lipton, Mira Via, 2004

A Community Issue

Think of an issue that requires attention in your School[plus] community. Make sure you have some information on hand related to the issue.

Think about others you might gather with to further inquire about this issue, with the purpose of coming to a decision. You will be reminded to consider this issue as you reflect on the questions provided.

Developing Shared Understandings – "Here's What"

Suppose you and a number of other members of your School[plus] community are asked to make a decision on how to go about addressing a certain issue. Wellman and Lipton suggest that before you begin to review the information you have in front of you that

you talk about your expectations and experiences regarding the issue.

For any given issue they suggest group members share with each other:

- the assumptions they hold about the issue or situation.
- predictions they might make about the issue or situation.
- the kinds of questions they have about the issue or situation.
- the possibilities for learning that the issue or situation presents. (Wellman and Lipton, 2004, page 44)

Questions to reflect on:

Think of the community issue you would like to inquire about. Before looking at the data/information you have already gathered, ask yourself: As a member of a working group, how might I go about sharing my expectations and experiences around this issue? How might this help develop shared understanding?

Making Connections – "So What"

Once a group has shared their expectations and experiences regarding an issue Wellman and Lipton suggest it is time to really explore the data or information they have on hand. They advise groups to avoid making explanations at this stage and instead focus on exploring and discovering what the data and information may be saying.

For any given issue group members are encouraged to consider:

- what points appear to "pop out" when I view the data or information?
- what are some of the patterns, categories or trends I see emerging from the data or information?
- what seems surprising or unexpected to me?
- what are some things that I think need to be explored? (Wellman and Lipton, 2004, page 44)

Questions to reflect on:

Using the same community issue that you identified earlier take a look at the data or information that you have on hand.

When you bracket your personal feelings or ideas about the data, what kinds of things just "pop out"?

How might exploring the data/information further help you discover connections or patterns?

How does looking for surprising or unexpected things within the data deepen exploration?

What are some things you think need to be further explored about this issue?

Providing Interpretations and Explanations – "Now What"

Once a group has thoroughly explored the data or information on hand Wellman and Lipton suggest it is time to consider what interpretations or explanations might be made.

For any given issue they suggest group members ask themselves:

- what explanations might we draw?
- what additional data sources do we need to explore to verify our explanations?
- what are some solutions we might explore because of our explanations?
- what data do we need to collect to guide implementation of our solutions? (Wellman and Lipton, 2004, page 44)

Here's What	So What	Now What

Wellman and Lipton, 2004

Questions to reflect on:

Think of the community issue you identified again. What explanations might you make based on results of your exploration of the data?

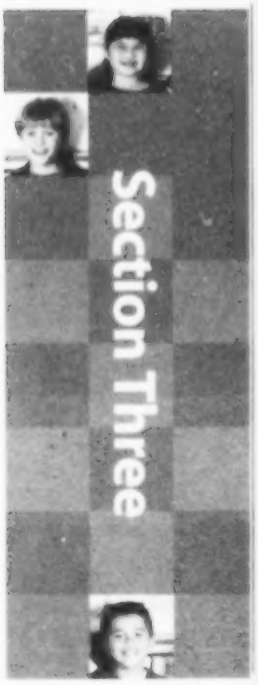
What additional information do you need to collect?

What are some solutions that you might explore because of your explanations?

What kinds of data do you need to collect to guide implementation of these solutions?

Personal Leadership Inventory

"Life is a dance you learn as you go
Sometimes you lead, sometimes you follow
Don't worry about what you don't know
Life is a dance you learn as you go"
John Michael Montgomery



The School[PLUS] Leadership skills described in Section Two are described here. To complete this inventory:

1. Check the skills you have.

2. Check the skills you want to develop – the ones that you feel would benefit you as a leader in a School[PLUS] environment.

Leadership Skill Set: Communicating in a School[PLUS] Environment	I Have	I Would Like to Develop
I can describe School[PLUS] in an informal manner, such as to a neighbor or friend.		
I can describe School[PLUS] in a more formal manner in front of an audience.		
I can describe School[PLUS] in writing.		
I look for opportunities to share School[PLUS] with other members of my community.		

Leadership Skill Set: Engaging and Organizing in a School^{plus} Environment	I Have	I Would Like to Develop
I can make a "cold call" for our visioning meeting.		
I can create a positive meeting environment so that people feel comfortable contributing.		
I can develop an appropriate "visioning" meeting agenda.		
I can gather information from other school communities about their "visioning" experiences.		

Leadership Skill Set: Identifying Actions and Initiatives, and Developing a Plan in a School^{plus} Environment	I Have	I Would Like to Develop
I know how to find out what the needs of children and youth within my community are.		
I know how to find out what the needs of my learning community are as a whole.		
I can look at the needs of individuals and the needs of the community as a whole and find a balance.		
I can get appropriate people together to discuss actions or initiatives.		
I can mount a creative search to uncover actions or initiatives that have worked for other communities.		
I can work with others to create a plan suitable to the actions and initiatives we have identified.		

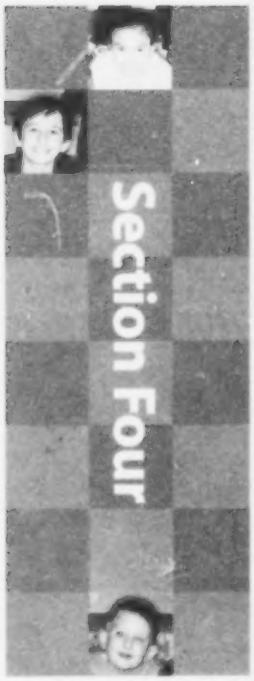
Leadership Skill Set: Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities in a School^{PLUS} Environment	I Have	I Would Like to Develop
I can write my own current job description describing responsibilities associated with my role.		
I can write my own future job description describing possible responsibilities associated with my role.		
I can help others define their current role and responsibilities.		
I can help others consider what their future role and responsibilities within School^{PLUS} might be.		
I demonstrate my role and responsibilities through my actions.		
I can listen and see many sides of an issue and help others understand different perspectives.		
I can help others identify potential barriers related to School^{PLUS} that could be holding them back.		
I can support others as they work to address these barriers related to School^{PLUS} that could be holding them back.		

Leadership Skill Set: Collaborative Inquiry in a School[PLUS] Environment	I Have	I Would Like to Develop
I am comfortable sharing my expectations and experiences with others regarding an issue associated with School[PLUS].		
I can work with others reviewing information we have gathered about a certain issue associated with School[PLUS] and look ahead to make predictions based on that information.		
I can review with others an issue associated with School[PLUS] and suggest relevant questions that could be asked.		
I can analyze an issue associated with School[PLUS] with others to uncover patterns or trends.		
I can work with others on an issue associated with School[PLUS] to come up with explanations for the patterns or trends we have uncovered.		
I can suggest what kinds of information regarding an issue associated with School[PLUS] that might help verify our explanations.		
I can suggest solutions for an issue associated with School[PLUS] that are based on our explanations.		
I can suggest the information we need to collect to monitor the results of our decision making regarding an issue associated with School[PLUS].		

Reflection and Planning For Success

The previous sections of this Guidebook provided you an opportunity to review the qualities that characterize School^{PLUS} leaders, challenges that may be encountered on the journey to School^{PLUS}, and some proposed leadership skills to support these challenges.

This section provides you, both individually and as a group, the opportunity to reflect and focus on the leadership skills identified. You can highlight current leadership strengths and identify additional skills you may wish to develop.



School^{PLUS} Leadership for Me

My leadership skill strengths within School^{PLUS} are:

_____

_____

_____

In the past I have been successful when:

_____

_____

_____

The leadership skills with School^{PLUS} that I want to develop are:

_____

_____

_____

My plan for developing these leadership skills is:

_____

_____

_____

Resources I have include:

_____

_____

Resources I need include:

_____

_____

School[PLUS] Leadership with Others

> *"...when individuals come together with a shared intention, in a conducive environment, something mysterious can come into being, with capacities and intelligences that far transcend those of the individuals involved"* from Come Together: The Mystery of Collective Intelligence *by Craig Hamilton, in* WIE, *May/July, 2004*

As noted throughout this Guidebook, School[PLUS] is about everyone working together to support children, youth and families.

> *"School[PLUS] is about getting everybody in the community (that includes everybody from parents to members of the business community, from teachers to resource officers and social workers) involved and working together to support children and youth. It's 'School', but with a [PLUS], because by working together we can give kids what they need, when they need it."*

In order to realize the School[PLUS] vision it is important that leaders in the School[PLUS] community reflect individually on the skills they require. It is also important that leaders reflect collectively on the skills required within their community to identify any leadership "gaps", and develop a plan to support individuals in developing additional skills that may be required.

Get together with some of the people you work with and share your plan. As a team:

Our School[PLUS] leadership strengths are:

_____

_____

_____

In the past we have been successful when:

_____

_____

_____

The leadership skills that we want to develop are:

_____

_____

_____

Our School[PLUS] Leadership Development Plan is:

_____

_____

_____

Resources we have include:

_____

_____

Resources we need include:

_____

_____

In closing, it is important to remember that this Guidebook is not intended to provide an all inclusive inventory of leadership skills in a School[PLUS] environment. It provides an overview of leadership skills, and is intended to serve as a guide and hands-on practical approach in supporting leaders in making School[PLUS] a reality in their community.

> *"School[PLUS] leaders can be anyone. They can be a teacher, a student, an elder or a member of the business community. Think 'outside the box' when you think about whom a School[PLUS] leader might be."*

School[PLUS] is not a program, it is a vision. What makes School[PLUS] different is that it recognizes the uniqueness of individual communities. It provides every community the opportunity to work together to create the conditions where **all** children and youth have the opportunity and supports they need to develop to their full potential.

The School[PLUS] vision helps us see that we can all be leaders and all our contributions matter. Your curiosity, your courage, your commitment and your "keep at it" perseverance will make School[PLUS] a reality in your community.

How an Elder Helped a Community

There once was a community where life was going so poorly that people slowly came to agree that things had to change.

They had heard of a wonderfully wise elder from a nearby village and decided to invite the elder to come and help their community.

The elder was invited and on the day of the meeting, the whole town showed up to hear what the wise elder had to say. The elder listened thoughtfully to the many problems the members of the community described.

After a good deal of time passed and all of the problems had been described, the elder moved to the side of the room and said, "Whoever is willing to lead the work to resolve these problems, come stand beside me."

When no one moved, the elder repeated the invitation. When no one moved, the elder turned and went home.

Months passed and once again the community decided to invite the wise elder back to help them.

Once again the whole community gathered and the elder listened to their many problems.

Once again, the elder moved to the side of the room and said, "Whoever is willing to lead the work to resolve these problems, come stand beside me."

And when no one stepped forward, the elder turned and went home.

Months passed and once again the community decided to invite the wise elder back to help them. Once again the wise elder listened to their problems.

Once again, the elder moved to the side of the room and said, "Whoever is willing to lead the work to resolve these problems, come stand beside me."

The community leaders did not want the elder to leave again so a few people stepped forward and stood beside the elder.

The elder turned to the people and said, "Now, we are ready to start."

The Vision for School^{PLUS}

Schools serve as centres of learning, service delivery and community where the developmental and learning needs of all Saskatchewan children and youth are met holistically in close partnership with families, community and other human service providers.

What is Community?

Community is a broad term but generally refers to a group of people with at least one thing in common – location, shared interest, values, experiences or traditions. Each of us may belong to several different communities – a neighbourhood or home town, a professional community, a volunteer community, or a school community.

The School^{PLUS} journey holds many opportunities – the opportunity for all children and young people to achieve excellence in learning and in life, the opportunity for all communities to share in supporting children and young people as they learn and grow and, finally, the opportunity for every citizen in our province to share in the promise of a prosperous future. (Source: *School*^{PLUS} *At a Glance*, Saskatchewan Learning)

Appendix A

School[PLUS] Literature Review Summary of Findings

Ongoing school reform efforts that shared the three characterizations that typify the School[PLUS] environment; community education practices, strong learning programs and integrated services had several common features:

- A vision of "school" as an environment that maintains its primary focus on learning and academic achievement of students, but also acknowledges and provides for students' and families' "other than pedagogical needs" by engaging school staff, family and community members and social and health service providers in the creation of structures and processes that best serve the needs of students and communities.
- A long-term (at least five years) commitment by all involved made at the onset of the reform effort. In many reform approaches an outside agency[1] provided pressure and support to help sustain the effort.
- The presence of an oversight structure that works collaboratively with schools to monitor progress[2] and supports effective linkages between school and community and school and other support agencies.
- An inquiry-based approach to reform typified by conduction of a school/community needs assessment and usually leading to the formation of collaborative governance structures including school staff and other interested stakeholders. Shared decision making and leadership as well as involvement of parents at several levels of governance are especially highlighted.
- An individualized school action plan that includes mechanisms for monitoring processes and outcomes.
- Professional development opportunities that are relevant to the reform issues and that are sustained over time.
- An assurance of long-term funding support.

The full literature review can be found at www.sasklearning.gov.sk.ca.

[1] In some cases this outside agency was a university, in others an educational organization dedicated to a certain reform measure, and in still others a charitable organization whose goal was to support the specified reform.

[2] Most reform efforts emphasized the importance of identifying and tracking best practices and most promising organizational frameworks as well as monitoring student academic achievement.

Appendix B

Field Study: Facilitated Dialogue Sessions Summary of Findings

In January and February of 2004, at the invitation of the School^{PLUS} Leadership Research Consortium, a number of school division communities within Saskatchewan took part in facilitated dialogue sessions related to their progress on School^{PLUS} initiatives. During the dialogue sessions facilitators asked teachers, community school coordinators/community developers, school and division level administrators, board members, human service personnel, educational associates, youth and parents to describe:

- how School^{PLUS} initiatives are currently working in their communities and how they envisage School^{PLUS} unfolding in the future;
- what kinds of leadership practices, skills and attitudes they thought would encourage the future development of their vision; and,
- what role they thought they might play in the continued development of School^{PLUS} in their region.

Facilitators took notes during these conversations and turned these notes over to a research analyst who reviewed the collective responses in order to discern dominant themes or patterns.

Summary of Themes: School^{PLUS} Field Study

1. The School^{PLUS} philosophy encourages individual communities to tailor the School^{PLUS} vision to meet the specific needs and desires of the community.

2. The School^{PLUS} environment is one with permeable boundaries. It is one where community members "connect" and share their expertise for the betterment of the whole community. It is a student-ready, inclusive environment that provides children, youth and families with help when they need it or "just in time". It is an environment where change is the norm and where community members are willing to "think outside the box" to address challenges and create opportunities.

3. The School^{PLUS} vision suggests leadership is open to all. Leaders are characterized by their willingness to take risks, ask questions about their own practice, welcome change, tolerate ambiguity and persevere in the face of challenges.

4. Communities may encounter several challenges as they seek to make their vision of School[PLUS] a reality. Some of these challenges may include: ensuring that all members of the community are familiar with the broad vision of School[PLUS], engaging community members in developing and working towards a particular School[PLUS] vision, clarifying roles and finding ways to connect with others and work together, and engaging in meaningful decision making.

School Division communities participating in the Field Study Dialogue sessions included:

Regina School Division #4
Saskatchewan Rivers School Division #119
Maple Creek School Division #17
Davidson School Division #31
North West R.C.S.S.D. #16
Ile A La Crosse School Division #112

Notes

Saskatchewan Educational
Leadership Unit

Saskatchewan
Learning

[illegible]